

THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Minutes of January 11, 2022

Commissioners Present – Brooke Foucault Welles, Jane Brown, Rakashi Chand, Cindy Greene, Eli Ingraham, Susan Lowcock, Tamika Olszewski

Commissioners Absent – Rabbi Keith Stern

Advisory Council Present – Bruce Apotheker, Viviana Planine

Student Representatives Present – Rachel Alpert-Wisnia (NNHS), Ryan Chitty (NSHS)

Guests – RoseAnn Murray, Eric Rosenbaum, Katani Sumner

Staff to the Commission – Shin-Yi Lao

The meeting was called to order by Brooke Foucault Welles, Chair at 7:03pm

1. Minutes from November 9, 2021 meeting approved
2. Newton police report – Officer Rosenbaum and Lt Apotheker
 - Three incidents occurred at Day Middle School in the beginning of November where the N-word was either used in graffiti or verbally. School officials and the youth officer are addressing the incident.
 - 11/9: A note was left on a Zervas teacher’s car. The note was reported to be racially motivated.
 - The N-word was used with a contractor at the Brae Burn Country Club. Charges were pressed.
 - 11/15: A note with a Nazi reference was left on a car that had a blue line sticker.
 - 11/19: Online posts which were anti-Semitic in nature targeting doctors and Newton community members. Under investigation by NPD and FBI.
 - 11/22: A student at Countryside drew a globe and colored Asia with a black crayon. When asked why, the student said, “because Asia sucks.” The principal is working with the students involved.
 - 11/23: Anti-LGBTQ graffiti was reported in an apartment complex.
 - 11/29: The principal of NNSH received an email containing hate speech.
 - 12/8: The principal of Bigelow received hateful voicemails and emails.
 - The “National Shoot up your School Day” trend on Tik Tok affected several Newton Schools. Officer Rosenbaum worked with the affected schools.
 - 12/16: Road rage incident where Asian residents reported a driver yelling “go back to your country.”
 - 12/18: Road rage incident where a pedestrian reported a driver yelling racial slurs.
 - 1/2: Resident reported “NOFORN” (slang for no foreign nationals) spray painted on their door.
 - 2021: highest number of hate incidents reported in the last 5 years (see stats from Bruce in email)
 - Lt Apotheker reported on statistics for bias related incidents in 2021. In 2021, Newton had 12 anti-Semitic, 25 anti-Black, 6 anti-LGBTQ, 1 anti-immigrant, 1 anti Indian, 5 anti Asian, 2 anti-Hispanic, 4 White power, 1 anti-Muslim, 1 sexism, and 1 anti-police/fire incidents. As a comparison, in 2020 Newton had 7 anti-Semitic, 10 anti-Black, 1 anti-LGBTQ, 1 anti-British, 1 anti-Indian, 2 anti-Asian, 1 anti-Hispanic, and 4 anti-White incidents.
 - Lt Apotheker also shared statistics related to opioid overdoses and domestic violence incidents in 2021.
3. Complaints received – Shin-Yi Lao
 - None received this month
4. Student reports – Rachel Alpert-Wisnia, Ryan Chitty
 - Rachel - NNHS

- i. Students have expressed concerns about disparities related to COVID-19. They have also expressed frustration about the lack of accommodation for students who miss class because they need to quarantine.
 - ii. Upcoming show “Lost and Found” where people of color share their experiences.
 - Ryan - NSHS
 - i. In December there were social media posts related to the “National Shoot up your School” trend on Tik Tok. NSHS was specifically named but the claims were false.
 - ii. The Human Rights Council recently held discussions about the 1/6/21 attack on the Capitol.
 - iii. A student artist is designing an LGBTQ-themed mural
5. Updates from the Mayor’s Office – no representative present
6. Updates from Commissioners
 - Cindy Greene: The FORJ chapters of NNHS and NSHS are hosting a joint program on 1/27/22: Building school community through affinity communities
7. Upcoming Events Announcements
 - MLK Day celebration (1/17/22) will be online again this year
8. Annual Report Discussion
 - Portions are complete
 - Brooke will confer with legal department on options for working on the document together without violating open meeting law
9. Chair Election
 - Tamika nominated Eli, Eli declined
 - Rabbi Stern has expressed interest, will work with Brooke on transition
10. Public Comment
 - Katani Sumner expressed concern about the lack of communication from NPS administration about what actions have been taken to address racist incidents that have occurred at sporting events with Westford Academy. She reports that these incidents have occurred over many years and across multiple sports. Brooke will reach out to NPS leadership and the MIAA.

Meeting adjourned at 8:18 pm

Next meeting will be February 1, 2022 on Zoom

Respectfully submitted by Brooke Foucault Welles